

Member Director Spotlight: Dr. Dennis Bradshaw

After more than 40 years in dentistry, Dr. Dennis Bradshaw still finds joy in the work. What began as childhood curiosity, watching his father in the dental office, grew into a lifelong career rooted in service, problem-solving, and connection. “I thought the work was really interesting, and being able to help people was very intriguing,” he says. “Besides, the forest ranger on Mars option just didn’t pan out.”

A Career Built on Growth and Relationships

Decades into his career, Dr. Bradshaw remains energized by both the technical and human sides of dentistry. The challenges of the profession continue to evolve, keeping his work engaging, but it’s the long-term patient impact that stands out most.

“Being able to meet people where they are and help them move toward better oral health is so rewarding,” he says. “I’ve seen so many patients start with significant dental issues, and over the years we’ve improved and stabilized their health. That’s incredibly satisfying.”

Those relationships often span generations. “After 40 years, we have multiple generations who are part of our dental family—it really feels like an extension of our own family.”

Proud to Be Part of Washington’s Dental Community

Dr. Bradshaw speaks highly of the dental community in Washington and its strong culture of learning. “Dentists everywhere probably think their state has the best dentistry—and we’re no different,” he says. “Several outstanding dental educators started here, and we’ve built incredible learning environments and study clubs.”

That collaborative spirit, he notes, helps elevate care across the region. “We have a really great dental community here, one that’s committed to sharing knowledge and growing together.”

As a DDWA Member Director, he brings that same mindset to the boardroom. While the complexity of the dental benefits landscape can be challenging, he values the opportunity to contribute meaningfully. “The business is very complex, with many interrelated pieces, and it takes time to understand how everything fits together,” he explains. “Like dentistry, being on the Board is about helping people. We make decisions that have an impact and improve people's health across the country, that is very rewarding.”

He was also struck by how much influence dental directors have. “There’s meaningful input from dentists at the table, and other board members truly want to hear our perspectives. That makes the role stimulating and worthwhile.”

Life Beyond Dentistry

Even outside the operatory, dentistry has remained a central part of Dr. Bradshaw’s life through continuing education and organized dentistry. He served on the Washington State Dental Association board for over a decade, including two years as president, and played a key role in planning the Pacific Northwest Dental Conference. “That work has been a real high point in my career,” he says.

At home, he and his wife, Traci, enjoy spending time with their two adult children and planning vacations together. He also finds satisfaction in hands-on projects. “I enjoy woodworking and DIY projects,” he says. “I recently finished building new cabinets for our laundry room renovation.”

Advice for the Next Generation

For those entering the profession, Dr. Bradshaw emphasizes the importance of connection and lifelong learning. “Get involved and stay educated,” he advises. “The relationships you build while giving back and continuing to learn are a huge part of what makes this career so special.”